**Unit 15 Listening Transcript**

**Links between climate and health, what we have to be optimistic about, and the crucial challenges that lay ahead.**

<https://theconversation.com/podcast-speaking-with-nick-watts-from-the-un-climate-summit-in-new-york-28466>

Begins 0.20mins

**Int:** So Nick, you work in climate and health, which is rapidly becoming a very important part of global health and the development agenda/the United Nations agenda. Can you tell us what is the link between climate and global health?

NW: Climate change is being called the biggest global health threat of the twenty first century. And I think it’s important to think about what it means for something to be the biggest theme. What we see with climate change is that as global environmental systems move and change you get changes in storms, you get changes in environmental patterns which drive various infectious diseases. You get increases in heat stroke, and cold-related death even. Across the whole range of what we, as health professionals, refer to as the social determinants of health – the determinants of health that are outside of the health sector – we see that global environmental change, or climate change, interact with each of these determinants at various points in the spectrum, either directly through, like I was saying, through heat stroke in a city like New York, where you get an urban heat island effect, or indirectly by causing mass migration as a result of… the water-bed of a small island state flooding. The links are at every stage of the health and development agenda.

**Int:** And talking of development, you’ve been talking a lot about the links or the concerns between climate change and health. Also for developing countries, for low- and middle-income countries. This is not just a problem for cities like New York, this is also a major challenge for cities like Delhi and Beijing, and other cities and regions in low- and middle-income countries. Can you tell us a little bit about this?

**NW:** That’s right. I think one of the messages that we heard yesterday from the World Health Organisation’s Director General, Margaret Chan, was that if we’re not very, very careful, very quickly climate change has the potential to unravel many of the gains that we’ve made over the last couple of decades in development and in global health.

From the work that you’re doing on non-communicable diseases, through to problems with infectious diseases – Malaria and HIV, Tuberculosis – there are links the whole way across the spectrum, and what we’re starting to see is, as climate change affects the social fabric of a lot of these countries and cities in low- and middle-income countries, we’re starting to see some of those advances that we were able to make being wound back. So in that regard climate change threatens progress we’ve made in the Millennium development goals, and if we don’t properly integrate climate change and action on climate change into the post-2015 development agenda I think we’re going to see that it becomes much harder to achieve a whole gamut of different global targets that we as a society might want to aspire to.

Ends 3.00mins